

## Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Mabel Hubbard Bell, November 7, 1894, with transcript

ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL TO MABEL (Hubbard) BELL Parker House, Boston. Wed. Nov. 7th, 1894. Dear Mabel:

Just arrived pretty well tired out — about 10 P. M. Reached Portland in the middle of the night — and visited the school there this morning. Miss Taylor seems to be doing a good work there. A Mr. Walker, who died recently, has left a large sum of money — about \$250,000 I think — for benevolent and charitable purposes without specifying — I understand exactly how the money is to be expended.

The courts have appointed three trustees — Mr. Banter (the mayor of the city), Mr. Fogg, and Mr. Larrabee — who seem to have absolute powers in the matter. The trustees are inundated with suggestions and petitions for this and that and the other thing — but as yet have taken no action.

They have been requested to grant fifty thousand dollars for the school for the deaf. Should this be granted the school would remain permanently in Portland — and become a school under private corporation (like the Clarke Institution) charging the State tuition fees.

Out of 55 children attending the school only 11 belong to Portland — so the necessity for boarding facilities is immediate — but if application is made to the state for an appropriation for this purpose — there would be serious danger of the school being transferred to Augusta or Bangor.

The people of Portland wish to retain the school — and 2 seeing that it has been in existence for about 18 years in Portland, I think it should remain there. Miss Taylor thought that I might do some good by calling upon the trustees of the Walker Estate — and upon

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some of the principal people here — and stating my views — so I spent the afternoon in this work. I called upon Governor Cleaves — who seems to be much interested in the school. He has already urged the claims of the school upon the trustees of the Walker Estate — and will also give the school his active aid in the legislature of Maine.

Mayor Banter, one of the trustees, is also thoroughly interested and so far as he is concerned, gives the proposition his thorough endorsement.

Mr. Fogg and Mr. Larrabee (the other trustees) both received me very courteously — but were entirely noncommittal in the expression of their views. There can be no doubt however — that Mr. Fogg is favorably inclined towards the school — at least so it seemed to me. An inclined to think that Mr. Larrabee is O.K. also — but can't be sure — and nobody else seems to know where he stands! As I went away I said “Mr. Larrabee — I can't quite make out — from what you say — whether you favor the school or not.” He laughed — and said — “I didn't mean that you should!” Neither he nor Mr. Fogg desired to commit themselves to any opinion until after the trustees have had a forsel meeting and discussion of the subject.

I called upon Mr. Bronson, one of the School Committee I saw last time — a newspaper man — the one who published the garbled extracts from my Northampton Address.

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I congratulated him upon the improved condition of the school, and expressed my high appreciation of the new Principal — Miss Taylor. Think he is much interested in the school — found him anxious to help the school to obtain an appropriation from the Walker Estate — will doubtless urge it in his paper. He gave me a note of introduction to Mr. Fogg and Mr. Fogg gave me a note to Mr. Larrabee.

Called also upon Mr. Lord — Superintendent of Schools — had a very pleasant visit there. He is doing all he can to urge the matter upon the trustees — and he feels pretty confident of success. While in his office I met Mr. Hyde (or Hind?) one of the Editors of the Portland

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Press — who proceeded to interview me upon the subject. I asked Miss Taylor to send a copy of the Interview to Beinn Bhreagh. Please keep it for me. Spent a busy day in Portland — and just caught the 6 o'clock train to Boston. Mr. Lyon left me at Portland, about 1 o'clock. Tired out — Goodnight.

Your loving husband, Alec.